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an elongate member wound about said spool, said elongate member having a free end extending from said support frame and a fixed end fixed to said spool;

a spring rewind motor operatively disposed between said support frame and said spool, said spring rewind motor exerting a torque on said spool for counteracting a rotational displacement of said spool in a first rotational direction caused by the paying out of said elongate member from said spool;

a viscous clutch assembly operatively disposed between said spool and said support frame to exert a retarding torque between said spool and said support frame, said viscous clutch assembly comprising a housing defining a sealed chamber, a viscous liquid contained therein, and a plurality of vanes disposed in said sealed chamber; and

a unidirectional clutch assembly operatively disposed between said spool and said support frame, said unidirectional clutch assembly operating to disengage said viscous clutch assembly when said spool is rotated in said first rotational direction, thereby permitting the paying out of said elongate member from said spool without said viscous clutch exerting a substantial retarding torque, said unidirectional clutch assembly further operating to engage said viscous clutch assembly such that said viscous clutch exerts a retarding torque between said spool and said frame for limiting rotational velocity of said spool when said spool is rotated in a second rotational direction for rewinding said elongate member onto said spool.

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9. An apparatus for storing an elongate member comprising:

a support frame;

a spool rotatably supported by said support frame, said spool having a cylindrical body and a pair of flanges extending radially outward from opposite ends of said cylindrical body;

an elongate member wound about said spool, said elongate member having a free end extending from said support frame and a fixed end fixed to said spool, said free end of said elongate member unwinding from said spool when said spool is rotated in a first rotational direction;

a spring rewind motor operatively disposed between said support frame and said spool, said spring rewind motor exerting a torque on said spool for retracting said elongate member onto said spool in a second rotational direction; and

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a unidirectional speed retarding apparatus disposed between said spool and said support frame, said unidirectional speed retarding apparatus comprising viscous clutch means and unidirectional clutch means, said viscous clutch means comprising means for providing a velocity-dependent retarding torque between said spool and said support frame, said unidirectional clutch means comprising means for disengaging said viscous clutch assembly when said spool is rotated in said first rotational direction for paying out said elongate member, thereby permitting said spool to rotate without said viscous clutch exerting a substantial retarding torque, said unidirectional clutch means further comprising means to engage said viscous clutch assembly such that said viscous clutch exerts a retarding torque between said spool and said frame for limiting rotational velocity of said spool when said spool is rotated in said second rotational direction for retracting said elongate member.

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17. (new) An apparatus for storing an elongate member comprising:

    a support frame;

    a spool rotatably supported by said support frame for supporting an elongate member wound thereabout, said spool being capable of rotating in a first direction for paying out a length of said elongate member and in a second direction for rewinding said elongate member;

    a spring rewind motor operatively disposed between said support frame and said spool, said spring rewind motor exerting a torque on said spool urging said spool in said second direction for rewinding said elongate member;

    a viscous clutch assembly operatively disposed between said spool and said support frame to exert a retarding torque between said spool and said support frame, said viscous clutch assembly comprising a housing defining a sealed chamber, a viscous liquid contained therein, and a plurality of vanes disposed in said sealed chamber; and

    a unidirectional clutch assembly operatively disposed between said spool and said support frame, said unidirectional clutch assembly operating to disengage said viscous clutch assembly when said spool is rotated in said first rotational direction and to engage said viscous clutch assembly when said spool is rotated in said second direction such that said viscous clutch exerts a retarding torque on said spool for limiting a rotational velocity of said spool when said

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spool is rewinding said elongate member, but does not exert a retarding torque on said spool when said spool is paying out a length of said elongate member.

18. (new) The apparatus of claim 17, wherein:

    said vanes comprise a plurality of stator disks and rotor disks defining a plurality of annular gaps therebetween, such that said viscous liquid is sheared in said plurality of annular gaps to provide a multi-plate viscous dampening.

19. (new) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein:

    said vanes comprise a plurality of paddles.